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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001515

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2009

TAGS: [ETTC](#) [PTER](#) [LE](#) [XM](#) [NL](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: TERRORIST FINANCE: EVOLVING DUTCH POSITION ON EU
DESIGNATION OF HIZBALLAH

REF: STATE 128139

Classified By: DCM Daniel Russel. Reason 1.5(d)

[1](#)1. (C) The Dutch government has moved much closer to supporting EU designation of Hizballah in its entirety. The "official" GONL position is that Hizballah is a political movement with a terrorist branch; the Dutch maintain that the political movement is represented in parliament in Lebanon, plays a role in the political process in Lebanon and the Middle East, and therefore should not be designated in its entirety. However, the Dutch have consistently supported designation of the Hizballah "terrorist branch" (Hizballah External Security Organization). Dutch Foreign Minister Bot foreshadowed a possible change in the Dutch position on April 20 when he departed from his interagency agreed talking points and told a parliamentary committee that he "is of the opinion that (Hizballah) should be on the (EU) list" but needs more facts to convince the other 24 EU member states that the political and terrorist branches cannot be differentiated. Bot has asked the Dutch security service (AIVD) to quickly come up with more proof of Hizballah's integrated nature. Significantly, during his April trip to Damascus, Bot reports that he told the Syrians "in firm language that Hizballah cannot have a foothold there." Dutch officials have also told us that the GONL might be able to "sponsor" the U.S. Barakat designation (reftel) in the EU clearinghouse process (especially given Barakat's links with the "terrorist side" of Hizballah).

COMMENT

[1](#)2. (SBU) Having led EU efforts to designate the entirety of Hamas, it will be difficult for the Dutch to argue that Hizballah should be treated differently. Nevertheless, having more "facts" at their disposal on the integrated nature of the Hizballah will make it easier for the Dutch to change their formal position. The Dutch position is probably also governed by tactical considerations -- there seems to be no compelling reason for a change in position at this moment and coming out fully in favor of Hizballah designation at this moment make it more difficult for them to craft an EU-25 consensus, especially during the 7/1-12/31 Dutch EU presidency. Nevertheless, it appears that when the time is auspicious, the Dutch will change their position to favor Hizballah designation.
SOBEL